

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
Re: DSS Budget
February 17, 2012

Barbara Albert, Hartford, CT

Good evening members of the Appropriations Committee, also everyone else.

My Name is Barbara Albert, registered voter, renter in Hartford, Advocate for Human Rights, and Multiply Medically Challenged Human Being. I am disabled, some visible, most not. I do volunteer work when able. I am on Medicare and Medicaid. According to a recent interview with Suze Orman, I am one of more than 100 million people in our country, currently 'living' under Federal Poverty Levels, about one half of us under, the rest, hovering at.

Due to several chronic illnesses, and little to no knowledge of the Governor's Budget Address last week, as well as little to no internet access, I lack any up-to-date information available concerning his proposed budget.

My last years and recent experiences with the Department of Social Services have been frustratingly horrific. My caseworker of two years, his supervisor, and her supervisor—I have yet to speak with any of them. Why does an already overloaded DSS case worker, triple the redetermination paper work, with someone who has been and still is indigent, unemployable, and about to be priced out of an apartment (of 16 ½ years) that does apply for rental assistance whenever possible, whose health has been declining due to worsening of chronic conditions most of which I will die from.

Stigma, discrimination, social injustice, gender inequality, and continued bad policy making, continue to undermine access to basic human needs. Denying access to healthcare and other social services denies any kind of hope for recovery, denies recognition as a human being as well as feeling I deserve to be treated like a human being. I continue to have no quality of life. I have no reason to be optimistic. There continues to be no reason for being. I realize that I am not alone. Everyone is eligible to become ill. Everyone is eligible to become older. Why are people like me still being treated like persona non-grata? I am not asking for handouts and won't. I am respectfully requesting, stop the apathy. I deserve to be treated humanely. Thank you for listening.

